

BOARD OF REGENTS FOR ELEMENTARY AND SECONDARY EDUCATION
MINUTES OF MEETING
January 12, 2006

A meeting of the Board of Regents for Elementary and Secondary Education was held at the Shepard Building - 255 Westminster Street, Providence, RI 02903 and convened at 4:20 p.m.

In Attendance

J. DiPrete, P. Guida, R. Camara, A. Beretta, G. Grove, M. Paradis and K. Forbes

Public Remarks

There were none.

Chair. Remarks

Chairman DiPrete reported on the following:

- He and Bob Camara had met with the Governor to talk about the Governor's and Regents' agenda and education budget. They urged the Governor to "Stay the course" and invited him to join the Regents for a follow-up meeting. They later met with Janet Durfee-Hidalgo to talk more about the Governor attending a special meeting of the Board of Regents to discuss in more detail the Regents work and agenda. Ms. Hidalgo will talk to the Governor about scheduling a meeting date.

Approval of Minutes

MOVED AND SECONDED: That, The Board of Regents for Elementary and Secondary Education Approve the Meeting Minutes and Executive Minutes of the December 15, 2005 meeting as Presented.

VOTE: Approved Unanimously.

Approval of Appeal

Chairman of the Board of Regents Appeals Committee, Amy Beretta read the recommended appeal decision for the Board.

MOVED AND SECONDED: THAT, in the Matter of Chrabaszcz versus the Johnston School Committee, the Decision of the Commissioner of Education is Affirmed.

VOTE: Approved Unanimously.

[Chairman DiPrete asked that the order of the agenda be changed to allow the Finance Committee to report out on the Rhode Island School for the Deaf presentation on a proposed new school. There were no objections.]

Rhode Island School for the Deaf "New School" Report

The Chairman of the Board of Regents Finance Committee, Robert Camara reported to the members of the Board that representatives from the school and architects had presented a plan for the proposed new School for the Deaf that will be located in Lincoln, next to CCRI and the Davies Career and Technical School. Principal, John Plante told the Board that the plans for the new school would incorporate all of the

activities and work requirements currently in place at the school – the education of PK – grade 13 deaf and multi-handicapped children; working with approximately 65 – 70 families with deaf children; the state outreach programs; and the housing of the state hearing center that currently serves approximately 66,000, of which 25,000 will require follow-up services. Mr. Plante gave a brief overview of the layout of the school and talked about the connections with the Davies School. The Regents discussed their support of this school as one of their priorities.

PK – 16 Report

Commissioner McWalters presented to the Board the PK- 16 report that he had made to the Governor's PK-16 Council in early January. A copy of the complete report is attached.

Report on Process for Reviewing BOR Regulations and BEP

Legal Council and Department Chief of Staff, Jennifer Wood told the members of the Board that the department is currently reviewing all of the Board of Regents regulations including the reauthorization of the Special Ed. regs originally passed in 2000; the restraint regs; the school health regs; the high school regs; and the length of school day regs and the BEP. Ms. Wood explained that a time line is being developed which will lay out all of the regulations that will require changes for Board approvals for public hearings; the scheduling of public hearings and then back to the Board for final approval. Within this process, proposed changes will be assigned for Board committee recommendations to the full Board for approval, as appropriate. The time line will go to the Regents CASP committee for discussion.

Committee Reports

PS&I – Committee Chairman, Patrick Guida updated the group on the PS&I districts as follows:

- Pawtucket – The school committee voted this week to authorize a “Caruolo ” action against the Pawtucket City Council and the department has been working with the high schools to coordinate high school graduation requirements. The group discussed the city's tax potential and the issue of low school budget increases (.03% over the past 8 years).
- Providence – A corrective action plan has been agreed and entered into. The new Superintendent should bring about positive changes to the system. There have been many positive changes seen in Hope High School.
- Woonsocket – the Department continues to work with the middle school involving the School Committee, Superintendent and school leadership/ “House” leaders.
- Johnston – The NEASC accreditation process is ongoing.

Commissioner's Report

- Commissioner McWalters told the members of the Board that the Governor's Office is close to finishing their legislative package and will be asking the Regents to convene their legislative committee to join in a "joint venture" with the Governor to support their legislation. The department has also hired Andy Andrade to work with the department/Regents during this legislative session as its liaison.
- The Commissioner reported that he had met with members of the House to talk about a proposal to establish a MET School on Aquidneck Island. So far there is only planning money available.
- He had also attended a meeting with the Governor to develop a state-wide plan to address the possibility that a Pandemic will hit the United States;
- Reported that the federal government is making money available directly to those districts that took in Katrina displaced children;
- The Federal budget for next year has been passed and more details will be presented in the future;
- Portsmouth has withdrawn its request for the Regents to consider allowing them to have a four-day school week.

Executive Session

There was no Executive Session.

Adjourn

With unanimous consent the meeting adjourned immediately at 6:40 p.m.